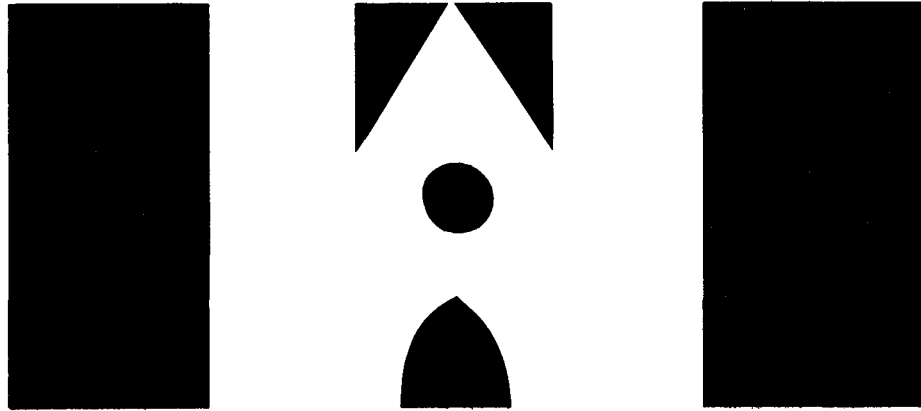


Volume LXXXVII No. 2      October 13, 1967      30 cents

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*The Church and Vietnam* **ROBERT McAFEE BROWN**

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## NEWS AND VIEWS

Olin Mathieson Chemical Corp., manufacturers of the 81-mm. illuminating projectile for the Army, celebrated the one-millionth projectile off its assembly line recently with fun and feasting at Ramada Inn in Marion, Ill., happy home of its projectile plant. Highlight of the festivities was the presentation of a model projectile, mounted on walnut plaque, to Brig. Gen. Bernard R. Luczak, commanding officer of the Army's procurement supply agency at Joliet.

Engraved invitations in gay curlicue lettering went out to newsmen and other favored types, among them Hugh Hough of the Chicago *Sun-Times*. Hough, his satiric appetite whetted by the bizarre celebration, banged out the following lead for a *Sun-Times* story:

"War is hell, but it can have its fun side, including cocktails and steak, in far-from-the-front Marion, Ill."

Incidentally, Olin Mathieson touched 81¼ recently on the Big Board, up 25 points from a previous 1967 quotation of 56½. Another huge gainer has been Dow Chemical, manufacturers of napalm. Dow has reached 84¼, up from 60¼ . . . Which proves once again how good war can be for business.

Pastor-parishioner disputes can be triggered by almost anything these days. In Wappinger Falls in the upper reaches of the Archdiocese of New York, near Poughkeepsie in Dutchess County, the pastor of St. Mary's Church, Msgr. Charles B. Brennan, stirred an unexpected tempest by banning a relief priest, Father Jude Mili, O.F.M., from saying Mass at St. Mary's. Msgr. Brennan's alleged reason was that one Sunday Father Mili had not followed the rubrics. Instead of holding chalice and host out in front of him during the minor elevation, Father Mili stretched out his arms, in the form of a cross, with the host in one hand and the chalice in the other.

Father Mili later apologized for this "deviation" and promised not to do

it again. Msgr. Brennan accepted his apology but refused to retract the ban. So a group of lay admirers of Father Mili entered the picture and the issue was joined. They circulated a petition, now signed by nearly 500 people, for Father Mili's reinstatement, took out an ad in a local paper, asked Dutchess County's Vicar, Bishop Joseph M. Pernicone, to try to effect a reconciliation, and appealed for mediation to the Chancery in New York City. All to no avail.

Msgr. Brennan says the matter is closed; Bishop Pernicone does not wish to become involved; the Chancery is being cautious.

Meanwhile, Father Mili continues to teach theology at Mt. Alvernia, the Franciscan seminary in Wappinger Falls, and to engage in various activities in behalf of peace, racial justice, open housing, the poverty program and other controversial community concerns. According to some observers, these activities had as much to do with Father Mili's dismissal from St. Mary's as his unrubricated elevation.

The situation looks to be a stalemate.

In New York, staffers at Negotiation Now! headquarters have settled down for an indefinite stay in their fifth-floor rooms of a nondescript building on lower Fifth Ave. "We're here till we get what we want: a negotiated political settlement to the war in Vietnam." That from Negotiation Now!'s East Coast coordinator, Thomas R. Ritt.

Negotiation Now! is conducting a campaign to enlist Americans behind a petition supporting U Thant's peace proposals, urging an end to the bombing of North Vietnam, and calling on North Vietnam and the NLF to respond affirmatively to any U.S. peace initiatives.

The campaign had a goal of one million signatures by Fall, but was lagging several hundred thousand behind when September rolled around.

The vacation months had taken their toll.

With Fall and the reopening of colleges and universities, however, interest in the campaign has picked up and headquarters' spirits are buoyed. Helping stimulate interest are volunteers who take turns at a phone contacting prospective peace promoters across the country. Among those doing the calling have been Philip Scharper, Norman Thomas and Edward Skillin, and a number of nuns, like Sister Bernadette, S.N.D., of Queens Village, N.Y.

The star attraction around headquarters is not, however, personalities such as these, but Vietvet Carl Rogers.

Rogers, who could step tomorrow into a Wheaties ad (he wears a crew-cut and teaches Sunday school at New York's Central Presbyterian Church) has been in the news since his return from Vietnam (where he was an Army SP-4); as when he sought to testify to U.S. war atrocities at the "disloyalty" trial of Capt. Howard Levy. Of course, he got nowhere near the witness stand. (Information about his exhibit material just may have preceded him to Fort Jackson. The exhibit: color slides of a dead Viet Cong guerrilla, whose ears had been lopped off as GI souvenirs.)

Almost everything about Vietnam troubles Rogers, including the distorted, superficial briefing that the Army dishes out to soldiers headed there. "GI's don't understand the issues," Rogers comments. "The only background they get is a short film called 'Why Vietnam?' It begins with a scene of Nazi Germany and dissolves directly into a picture of Ho Chi Minh, as if he represented the same threat to world peace as Hitler did."

Educational adventuresomeness worth commending: the symposium, "*Populorum Progressio* and the Twentieth Century," co-sponsored by McQuaid Jesuit High School of Rochester, N.Y., and the Planned Parenthood League of Rochester & Monroe County. Among the speakers: Father Dexter L. Hanley, S.J., and Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher.

JOHN DEEDY

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Melkites in Harlem

Hackensack, N.J.

To the Editors: Thomas E. Bird's discussion of the Melkite presence in the United States ("Big Brother vs. the Melkites," August 25) is excellent so far as it goes. He omits, however, what I consider an important Melkite contribution to Christian life and witness in the New York area, the founding of Emmaus House in East Harlem under Rev. David Kirk.

The reasons that I find Emmaus House a source of hope are several. Structurally, it is an arm of the famous East Harlem Protestant Parish: this makes the parish's team ministry to the needs of the area more fully ecumenical. Internally, Emmaus House is organized not on the basis of a rule but on the basis of the tasks that arise from community needs. Since one need of the ghetto community is the presence there of people from downtown and the suburbs, the weekly "conversations" with such people as Dorothy Day, Hans Hoekendijk, Joseph Cunneen, serve a double function, as do the liturgical celebrations at Emmaus House.

Because of its task-orientation, Emmaus House has (it seems to the visitor) a rich community life among its staff members that is marked nevertheless by sharp individuation. Some of the staff live at the house; others live elsewhere. Their unity is not one of place but of concern, their hierarchy not one of office but of skill. Thus, Kathryn Mahon who teaches school in East Harlem lives in a nearby apartment and, during the summer program she conducts for children in the area, outranks Rev. Richard Mann, who is responsible for the evenings of dialogue.

Perhaps most important of all, Emmaus House received Bishop Justin's blessing purely and simply as an *experiment*. It is testing many ways in which modern, urban man can discover in the stranger what the disciples found on the

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COMMONWEAL A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts.

Second-class postage paid in Philadelphia, Pa. Printed in the USA and published weekly, except biweekly Christmas-New Year's and July-September,

by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016

Murray Hill 3-2042. Copyright © 1967 Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.

US and Canada, \$9 a year. Foreign \$11.

## THE MERCHANT OF MENACE

American stakes in Vietnam have swollen to the point where this country either will have to destroy Vietnam utterly or be dragged to the conference table by the heels. However, negotiations, though distasteful, are viewed somehow as ineluctable, so while the Administration maintains its essentially military approach to the whole involvement it continues to pay reluctant lip service to the idea of a political settlement.

Vietnam, meanwhile, has become another war to end all wars, this time the national liberation variety, justified in increasingly hollow and circuitous logic. Johnson's recent attempt to "get through" to the people merely intensified the frustration of those who had hoped for signs of a more conciliatory posture in response to increasingly anxious appeals for negotiations. Although Johnson was less belligerent in tone, a fact widely celebrated, in reality he reiterated his firm resolve to "win" by armed might a war which has become to an anxious world a grim exercise in the absurd.

The speech itself was testimony to how politically shaky Johnson has actually become over the war. The worldwide pressure for a bombing halt, a peace movement no longer dissenting but actually preparing to "confront" the Pentagon on Oct. 21-22, a nationwide "dump-Johnson" movement, the defections of former stalwart Congressional supporters, and mounting Republican and business disaffection—all bear witness to the kind of trouble LBJ is really in. Not even the South Vietnamese will sit still for their protectors: the Constituent Assembly, apparently under the delusion that democracy was something more than an American slogan, for a time threatened to nullify the elections on grounds of systematic fraud at the polls.

For those still perplexed as to why then the Administration appears so relentless in its pursuit of the war, having ignored every opportunity to effectuate an honorable withdrawal, a hint was provided by James Reston in his column Oct. 1. "I am not going to be the first President of the United States to lose a war," Johnson is quoted as saying back in 1963. Subsequent

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attributions have borne witness to a man obsessed with a personalized image of history, buoyed by a devil theory that would have embarrassed Theodore Roosevelt. A man who must deal with the politics of a problem rather than the problem itself, Johnson has, Reston intimates, lost touch with the dangers of present realities. "He presented himself at San Antonio as both the bold Churchill, defending Western civilization, and the cautious Eisenhower, who refused to plunge an American expeditionary force into a war on the continent of Asia," Reston writes. "(But) he argued that the failure to do so would not only lose South Vietnam but might also lose all of Southeast Asia and lead to a World War, which is precisely the proposition Eisenhower rejected . . ."

I. F. Stone once wrote that Johnson is obsessed with the image of his predecessor, constantly trying to prove himself as virile and decisive. But Johnson meanwhile has isolated himself from the very opinion that could move this country toward a settlement, and has chosen to goad China to the point where we may soon be yearning for the relative calm of the Cuban missile crisis.

## CHURCH INVESTMENTS

Churchmen have been clucking or thundering over the poor for centuries, but in the United States of late a rising note of urgency has appeared in statements of religious leaders about the mounting anger among the poor, especially the black poor, in American ghettos. Increasingly, perceptive churchmen recognize that pious calls for justice and personal service to the poor must be backed up by mobilizing the Churches' considerable economic resources and political influence.

Thus, several Catholic dioceses subscribe to Project Equality and refuse to deal with companies or unions with discriminatory (anti-Negro) hiring policies; the Archdioceses of Detroit and Newark are sponsoring ghetto housing programs; the National Council of Churches has pledged about \$165,000 to slum investments, all to be controlled by ghetto residents; and Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church John E. Hines recently asked for a three-year, \$9-million dollar program of aid, also to be managed by the poor themselves.

In addition to these forms of support, however, perhaps something more radical could be asked of the Churches in America, namely that they open their investment portfolios, if not to public scrutiny at least to stringent private examination, to determine whether Church investments in industry, real estate, banks, utilities or other financial enterprises are underwriting any part of the economy that exploits the poor or perpetuates the ghettos that trap them.

Some religious leaders may deem it impractical to try to bring financial investments into line with the requirements of social, economic and racial justice, thinking

that, in our economy, the result would be no investment at all. Certainly it would not be easy to implement such a proposal on a large enough scale to make it effective, especially in the Catholic Church, given the relative financial autonomy of dioceses and religious orders.

Still, if they wish to avoid the charge of hypocrisy, the Churches must go the extra mile for the poor, beyond service and hand-outs. The next step is a close look at Church investments to see whether they contribute to or undermine a just economic order.



## **Kinesthetic Happening: Art or Atrocity?**

Ever whip a lady mannequin? Have your photo taken with your arms spread out on a cross? Taste black mashed potatoes? Have a pillow fight with foam rubber in a darkened gym? I have. And so did my fellow participants in the International Congress on Religion, Architecture and the Visual Arts held recently in New York.

For me the most memorable part of the week-long affair took place not at the swank New York Hilton, where the Congress was quartered, but at Judson Memorial Church in Greenwich Village. On the second night of the gathering half of the participants, including artists, ministers, priests, architects and nuns, all zipped down to the church for what was billed as a "Kinesthetic Happening." Its title was "Ordeals." It was. Judson Church is well known for its inventive ministry in the Village and for its contribution to *avant-garde* theater and dance. When I arrived at the church a three-abreast line of ticket holders stretched for nearly two blocks. I came back an hour later since I knew the happening, like a carnival crazy house, took people a few at a time through several phases. When I finally entered, however, I realized how close the carnival analogy is. The happening, assembled by Lawrence Kornfeld and Al Carmines, drew on the midway, the sideshow and the peek-show, as well as on the theater of cruelty and the theater of the ridiculous. It was a weirdly ordered bedlam of assorted experiences designed not only to shock, tease and baffle the masses, but also to give its producers a fun evening.

Upon entering I was signed in, kissed by a comely Negro girl, and then stood with several other guests in what appeared to be a police line-up where lights blinded us while interrogators screamed questions at us. Next came the saliva-confusing encounter with the black mashed potatoes, followed by a brief glance of a couple writhing in bed with the boy loudly preaching a sermon.

A room or two later we all lay on cushions, nursery school style, while a frenzied caricature of a kindergarten teacher told us a nonsense-horror story about a ferocious

Head bowed but still not bloody, I then wound my way down a staircase past a young man reading while seated on a toilet, past a collage of nudie photos, and out into a pleasant courtyard. There couples were dancing in the dim light to 1920's records. A lively impresario urged us all to dance so I stepped off with a statuesque blonde. Within a few minutes I discovered she was a man. All the girls were, and the boys were girls. It does shake one up a bit to make the discovery. I manfully finished what suddenly seemed to be the longest dance in my memory, thanked my partner and wandered away, the picture of nonchalance.

Last came a kind of foam rubber garden of delights. Ladies were carried to it on the backs of strong young men; men were deposited in it by nubile girls in hip huggers. In the squeegy darkness one could hear screams, sighs and suspicious silences. Eventually a girl in a nurse's uniform holding a flashlight called me into another room where she looked down my throat and sent me out to the street. The happening was over.

logical bloodhounds off the track. It was what it was and little more. It was an experience of uncertainty, anger, eroticism, confusion, fun. It asked nothing else from us. After that one "performance" it was torn down and the cast dismissed. It will never happen again.

Time was when art was supposed to mime the great natural rhythms and vitalities of the cosmos. Then we discovered that those cosmic pulsations are not nearly as serenely ordered as we thought. Art began to create its own internal order which it invited us to share, the way we conspire with a storyteller's fictive universe. Even more recently, artists have begun to leave more and more of the ordering process to the viewer, the listener, the consumer. The artist becomes, as Sister Corita says, the sign that it is man who orders the world, and not the other way round.

HARVEY COX

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**CHURCH-STATE IN GERMANY**

***AN UNEASY ALLIANCE***

decibels of his ovation far surpassed those of bishops or other prelates. Whether a matter of Western integration, rearmament, domestic policy or social climate, Catholic sentiment was firmly on his side.

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This was underlined by the fact that the SPD, with its leftist orientation, could be coupled with "softness toward Communism," one of the foremost crimes of post-war German politics. But for the Christian Democrats, the identification of spiritual, political and pragmatic thinking seemed complete; the few critics within the Church lived a life on the fringes.

This led, in much of the Federal Republic, to a large-scale identity, not only of interest, but of personnel: throughout the country CDU party workers were often interchangeable with the Catholic laity on the grass-roots level of party organization.

With Adenauer's resignation, some old cracks in the social and political fabric began to re-emerge. Professor Erhard, while striving to maintain close relations with Catholic organized power (he is a Protestant), was nevertheless suspect to the hard-core integralists. Although the restoration of big capitalism under Adenauer had been accepted, there remained a subterranean distrust of big commerce and industry among lower-middle class militants; this distrust began to reassert itself when Erhard, who was the father of the "*Wirtschaftswunder*," became the central CDU figure. Even early in Erhard's reign the sniping began, along with hints about the desirability of the "strong hand," meaning the establishment of a Great Coalition between the CDU and the SPD. This possibility became thinkable because of vast changes within the Social Democratic Party. After many bitter defeats, Herbert Wehner, the decisive figure, opted for respectability at all costs. He dumped the last remnants of the Marxist image and converted the venerable old party into a so-called *Volkspartei*, i.e., something any "respectable" German could vote for, and did, thereby creating for German Catholicism the dangerous situation of being left without an adequate enemy.

But another danger has become more important, if less noticed: a shift of voting strength for the Christian Democrats. While many small towns and even rural areas show a growing percentage of SPD voters, more and more attention had to be paid to the augmented "floating vote" in the huge city agglomerations of the industrial West. Here, as elsewhere in Western Europe, traditional "ideological" issues have diminished proportionate to the "concrete."

Suddenly, the political professionals realized what thoughtful critics had long claimed: namely, that even for a Christian party secular forces were more important than the support of the Church, and that the vast organizational network so laboriously constructed for two decades had become obsolete from its inability to deliver the vote. Disengagement of Church from Party, longstanding demand of inner-Church critics, seems to meet the present mood of the CDU more than that of the Catholic leaders.

This fact, ugly as it must seem to many, ended certain speculations afloat during the preliminary period of SPD adaptation. One of the most interesting "disengagement"

versions was promoted, some years ago, by Msgr. Karl Forster, long-time head of the Catholic Academy of Bavaria and now secretary of the Permanent Bureau of the German bishops' conference. He had hinted, then, that German organized Catholicism might sell its vote to the highest bidder; that it could, before important elections or in crucial moments of political realignment, voice its demands and wait for the best possible answer—either from Social Democrats or from Christian Democrats.

This plan, as events proved in the meantime, overestimated the "solidarity" of the Catholic milieu on two important counts. First, it overrated "delivering power": it is questionable whether the Church can exert a direct influence on more than 5-8 percent of the voters, and this is not enough to swing any decisive election. Second, a large section of the existing CDU grass-roots support is existentially immobile; it could never bolt the party at the bidding of the Church. The identity of Church and CDU personnel is still a social reality, and it would block effectively any attempt on the part of the hierarchy or the central organization offices to "go SPD." Besides, as soon as the Great Coalition was achieved, a sharp drop in the lobbying power of the Church was evident. It manifested itself mostly in the revamping of the old school laws and the quick emergence of a "Christian inter-denominational" (read secular) school system in hitherto Catholic states.

It is a sad fact that all these secular developments have done much more to implement necessary changes in a post-conciliar Church than its own spiritual and social effort. True, the spadework of German and French theologians did and does help to cope with change; but Catholic "leadership" would never have initiated the necessary disengagement. It needed cold, brutal outside forces to achieve what decades of clear theological thinking and the voices of the conciliar fathers have never accomplished.

In consequence, the Church finds itself largely unequipped to deal with the new situation. I doubt, for instance, whether more than ten members of parish boards in the vast city of Munich are active workers in the SPD, or whether one single active Catholic works with the radical student group, the SDS, which is, at the moment, the only revolutionary ferment in West German society. There is a host of problems confronting us, but the methods and means of confrontation (let alone of uncovering some problems by our own efforts) are woefully unknown. The only tangible result of the Council is the liturgical reform which I've begun to regard as "opium," not so much for the people but for the clergy. Liturgical reform gives you the feeling that something—anything—is happening; much more important would be a new self-understanding of the Church achieved *from below*, which is not yet in sight. The social significance of the Catholic Church in West Germany, despite outward splendors, has reached its lowest point.

CARL AMERY

(*Carl Amery is a prominent West German journalist and the author of Capitulation [Herder and Herder.]*)



## A TIME TO CREATE

*Reaching out "to fresh minds and open hearts"*

**PAUL J. HALLINAN**

A liturgical undergrowth exists in the United States. It is impossible, since wild vegetation cannot be measured, to estimate how far-flung or effective it is. It is equally obscure, at this point, whether it is composed of earnest, imaginative priests and laymen, or a generation of showmen and novelty-seekers.

This much may be said: the undergrowth has not become an *underworld*. Its spirit appears to rise chiefly out of what Vatican II's "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" terms those "providential dispositions of God in our time." True growth is often hurt, but not suffocated, by a certain immaturity in some, a narrow vision coupled with willfulness.

In past decades, the thin red line of experimental liturgists served God's people well. While Rome scolded and bishops frowned, they walked their lonely way. It was not until the overwhelming passage of the Liturgical Constitution at the Council that they were recognized and saluted. We need to look closely now at the undergrowth stretching across hundreds of colleges, seminaries and parishes. It might include the rightful heirs of these pioneers.

In distributing some control of the liturgy to local bishops and episcopal conferences, the Council stated the limits clearly: "Absolutely no other person, not even a priest, may add, remove or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority." But what haunts the priest and layman today is not the confinement of authority, but the use of it. They know too well the recurring theme of the liturgy document: that the divinely instituted elements are unchangeable, but those practices which have crept in, "less harmonious, less functional," are to be changed. This li-

turgical thrust, expressed over and over by the council fathers, drives them on. They accept guidance, scholars' research, and episcopal direction. But the priests and laymen want "in." If the people's participation is to be "knowing, active and fruitful," they cannot see why their own role should be merely passive.

There is a time to create, Cardinal Lercaro wrote recently, and there is a time to uncover and live by all the riches of our liturgical reform. Although he was speaking of translations, he touched the very heart of reform. He concluded that we are still at the point where we must more fully uncover the past; it is not opportune now to "jump the gun" by creative activity. But this burden of restoration is long and complex. The spontaneous, creative task is more exciting. It suits young spirits, man's need to express himself in ritual, the voice and demands of the world, its "joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties," identified in the "Church and the Modern World" as those of the followers of Christ. Those who feel the strong desire to create have only a limited interest in dusty sacramentaries. The great issue in today's pastoral worship is, how best will God be praised in the accents of our society, how best will this vast, impatient, ailing body be served?

### *Historic New Directions*

The key to the Council's reform was that "liturgy is for men, and not men for the liturgy." A pastor, Cardinal Montini, Archbishop of Milan, said it on the fourth day, Oct. 22, 1962. During the debates, words clashed in the basilica, but when the liturgical draft was overwhelmingly approved, Montini's phrase was still ringing. All but four council fathers voted to redirect the course of liturgy. It was a historic moment.

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ARCHBISHOP PAUL J. HALLINAN is Chairman of the Committee on Liturgy of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

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The Catholic world was suddenly hit by the impact. It proved dramatic for those who wanted to worship God in a scriptural, pastoral style. And to those whose faith was locked and secure in the old rigidity, it almost proved traumatic. Unlike collegiality and ecumenism, the new liturgy touched directly and immediately the life of every Catholic. The results were diverse. On the desks of bishops and pastors were letters of warm gratitude and hope. But others were expressed in such unkempt slogans as "Throw that ironing-board altar out!" Gradually, local commissions worked with priests to reach the people. It became particularly effective in those parishes which had long ago moved with Pope Pius XII's *Mediator Dei*. Loyalty then begot loyalty now.

Four years have brought many changes. Too often these are mere externals. Both the old mentalities, and the short time since the old ways have worked against a living liturgy. But it would be faulty to assume that bishops and the Curia make up the resistance, and that young priests, Sisters and laymen are always the impatient ones. There is a fresh liturgical spirit in every sector of the Church, and even from the new generation come letters of protest against lectors and guitars that would curl the hair of the most outspoken reactionary.

This is not the place to describe the liturgical work of the American hierarchy. But the comment, "the bishops were brave in Rome, but timid back home," can leave an ugly untruth for history to devour. The bishops of the United States (and their *periti*) helped prepare, and then defended the liturgy schema. They voted in November, 1963, and again in April, 1964, to use all the vernacular possible. They have carried on the reform in dioceses and seminaries, in church music and architecture. The Americans joined nine other English-speaking groups in preparing a readable, accurate international text. Commissions have been set up in parishes and dioceses. The bishops pushed for the vernacular canon, and approved the new text by a 95 percent majority.

Meanwhile, back in Rome, the Consilium became the post-conciliar instrument of reform, under its pastoral head, Cardinal Lercaro. It has worked incredibly hard, and has tried to balance a pastoral approach with cautionary warnings. Unfortunately it has been blocked, both within and without its own membership, by those who fought so hard against reform during the Council. Back in 1963, one curial member (deeply offended by the idea of a local bishop's making liturgical decisions in his own diocese) cried out: "Impossible! Every change must be approved by the Congregation of Rites". The old cardinal-chairman, hardly a liberal himself, reminded him: "You forget, Eccellenza, that the Council is above even the Congregation of Rites."

It is significant that this was said even after the Holy Father had called upon the Curia to reform and update its procedure. Paul VI, earlier that fall, had demonstrated to its members, "how such an establishment would have

grown ponderous with its own venerable age . . . Rome has no need to defend itself by being deaf to suggestions that come to it from honest voices, especially if they are of friends and brothers."

### *Trees and Weeds*

Heavy centralization can become a weed stifling the tree of a vital liturgy. That the tree is still strong is due to scholars and pastoral bishops (like the devoted Cardinal Lercaro) and the man who gave a vibrant call to renovation at the Council, Cardinal Montini. The minor reforms are good, as far as they go, but it is a long road yet to a "clear liturgy," what the Liturgical Constitution sees as "a noble simplicity . . . short, clear and unencumbered by useless repetition . . . within the people's comprehension . . . normally not requiring much explanation . . . with an intimate connection between words and rites."

But up to now the work of the Consilium can be considered experimental, only in the sense that much of it is on trial. It lacks a broad base of pastoral usage. It is a job of recovery and testing. But this does not guarantee a contemporary liturgical style. Substance is not shape. It is timeliness that is needed. A tree will die without a fixed pattern of trunk and roots. But it is the growing arms that give it strength, and the flowering buds and leaves that add beauty. The root and trunk have permanence; the arms and buds are timely.

A liturgy for men must pray as *they* pray, in words and gestures familiar to *them*. It should lead them from the altar to the homes and streets of the city. But testing of set forms is creative only if those with competence and faith are free to explore. There is too much now that is official and prescribed, too little that is spontaneous. A little of this "grass-root" material is beginning to appear. In the United States, specific proposals may be given to a new subcommittee on experimentation. A Mass for small groups is one example. After careful study, the proposal may be submitted to the body of bishops, and if approved, to Rome.

Why then are so many, especially young priests, discontented? In time the two-way street of experimentation seems due to become a very busy route. But today the cumbersome process, the delays and frustrations have created this climate of unrest. Enter, unauthorized, the "Dutch Canon," self-communion, new twists with word and rite. Enter, on a lower key, pop art forms like the altar surrounded by 76 oil cans to show forth "Involvement in the World" and a maze of stacked paper boxes labeled, "I must be what I am." Enter, on a note piteously low and coarse, the Mass featuring a bottle of drug-store wine and a loaf of supermarket bread.

What are these things saying to us? Whether healthy or drained of all reverence and meaning, they reveal an unrest with forms that they call "churchy." The cause could lie in the old rigidity and formalism, or the official

hesitation of the present. But Dr. Margaret Mead, the American anthropologist, finds a deeper root—man's need to find meaning in the universe, to relate to it. "It is this need," she adds, "to which the whole liturgy of the Church gives particular expression." The pioneer liturgist, Father Romano Guardini, is just as blunt: "Does our present liturgy contain parts that mean little to mod-



ern man? Ought we not consider how best to celebrate the sacred mysteries so that man today can grasp their meaning through his own approach to truth?"

Are these questions so startling? Vatican II did not hesitate to examine them. It urged the Church's leaders to listen to the ground swells of a shifting society. To interpret them, the Council insisted upon psychology and sociology, religious and social surveys, in both the "Church and Modern World," and the decree "On Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church." Thus the Christian imperative—"a profound respect for the mysterious, inviolable dignity of the human person" (Diekmann)—will get not just lip service.

More creative experimentation, even in a framework of order, will not end the unrest. Indeed, a share of unrest is needed. But the experimentation can reach out, as the Council did, to fresh minds and open hearts. It can amplify our process of praise and sanctification beyond the sanctuary to the city. Unauthorized and undisciplined rites will not be silenced, but good experimentation can make channels for what is valid in them. The cries of anonymous man, discontented youth, the destitute and the deserted, merit an audience at God's altar just as much as the voices of the child, the sinner and the sufferer. It is the liturgists' work to make sure that all get heard.

Recently, in a wise essay, Rosemary Haughton [*Commonweal*, Aug. 25] urged "open experiments, openly arrived at." She argues that liturgy should grow out of community; and those most deeply committed to the renewal are demanding the reform. But she takes time out to show why clandestine experimentation will fail. First, it cannot be widely shared, and it has no real test for relevance. More important, "it destroys unity, creates barriers between brethren, encourages spiritual snobbing, and necessitates 'double-think'." That is quite an indictment, and some authorities may mistakenly want to borrow it. But it is not her main theme. She argues eloquently for a

liturgical situation where the community is aided by competent and authorized guides to prepare, test and finalize new structures. Within the community will be found priests, religious and laity—and the cooperative presence of the trusting bishop.

If Catholic leaders listen to this unrest, no matter how untrained the voices are, they will catch some authentic sounds. Under the twanging of the guitars are sounds of hope and haste, of bitterness, joy and even despair. The rhythms of the new beat are part of our society. But it is not enough just to listen. Those who guide the new liturgy should live with those caught up in today's grossness. They must talk with them, share with them, and even suffer with them. When a young man has cause to rejoice, the liturgist should know how to collaborate with him in composing a new hymn or a fresh prayer. And because the pastor and bishop are leaders for the Lord, each should take the lead in opening up new channels for the Lord's children. Structuring Catholic life is his role; sadly at times, so is correction and reproof. Today perhaps, the most urgent of his tasks is to stimulate and help. He should stand, not in a shady corner, but in the midst of his people. There he serves by love and compassion, but also by pointing the way.

To widen the field of healthy experimentation, two steps could be tried out. According to present law, they would have to be approved by the body of American bishops and the Holy See. (1) Could not experimental centers be established in three or four of our most liturgically-oriented universities? This would be no green light for improvised "campus liturgies" but fully authorized programs where outstanding liturgists and other specialists (in theology, scripture, literary style, music, etc.) would work with selected students, preparing and testing new forms. These would then be submitted, so that Rome would benefit by this fresh scholarship and pastoral experience, and the center would gain by its service to the universal Church. (2) Could not bishops who wished to do so authorize a group within the diocese—a parish, school or seminary—to prepare and try out new proposals? Wide resources and liturgical experience would be essential. A true experiment could be achieved if the whole interested community took part from the beginning, studied carefully the requirements under a priest-guide, and then tested it for a time. The interest and cooperation of the bishop would, of course, be essential.

Given man's flair for that which is novel, any liturgy that is authentic must have order, continuity and guidance. Mature advocates recognize this. At Kansas City, thousands applauded freer experimentation and more flexibility, though very few opted for an anarchy of the altar. But given the centripetal force of any institution, the leaders of our common worship tend to preserve the *status quo*. They must find time to change, to adapt, in a word, to create. Thousands upon thousands who love the Church are convinced that the time is now.

**HIRSCHEL KASPER**

Today, there is neither price stability nor full employment; consumer prices are rising at a rate of about 3 percent per year (wholesale prices at about 1 percent per year) and at least 3 million are unemployed. The prospect of a \$25 billion deficit for fiscal 1968 implies that many of the unemployed may be better able to find jobs, but that prices will rise even faster than they did this past year. A tax increase to reduce the deficit will lessen the rate of price inflation, but restrict the opportunities of the unemployed and under-employed to obtain better employment. In the immediate future there is no way substantially to increase employment of all the poor, black and white, without incurring more inflation.

A statistician, perhaps, would expect to find as many years of high inflation as high unemployment in the last 15; a naive economist would probably expect to find inflation more frequently than unemployment, since the very nature of unemployment is self-corrective, unlike inflation. Yet, as both the statistician and economist well know, unemployment, beyond any institutionally necessary minimum, has been a perennial problem and inflation has been periodic over the past decade and a half. Apparently economic policy makers have had a greater preference for price stability than full employment and, as the decade of the 1950's makes clear, this preference did not originate in response to a balance of payments problems. During the middle-50s, when we had a balance of payments surplus and our gold stock was increasing, we left 3 million workers unemployed and 15 million family units in poverty in an attempt to keep prices from rising more than 2 percent per year.

*Commonweal*: 50

If our economy has, in fact, reacted more sharply to the threat of inflation than to the threat of unemployment and poverty, it is important to review the stated reasons for this preference.

The major arguments in favor of price stability *at the cost of unemployment* are (1) inflation harms more people more often; (2) inflation is an "arbitrary" tax; (3) inflation misallocates resources when it is unexpected; and (4) inflation tends to harm those persons who have been the most economically successful, those who, some would argue, are the "better kind, obviously." The major arguments in favor of reduced unemployment *at the cost of inflation* are (1) unemployment wastes scarce resources; (2) unemployment falls on those least economically able to bear it; (3) unemployment permits and encourages social evils, such as racial discrimination and juvenile delinquency; and (4) unemployment, reduces the rate of economic growth and technological progress.

If all of the arguments contain at least a kernel of truth, that is to say nothing more than that neither unemployment nor price stability is costless. There remains, therefore, a problem of choice. Is the decision to contract demand economically defensible? I think the answer is that, on most important criteria, it is not.

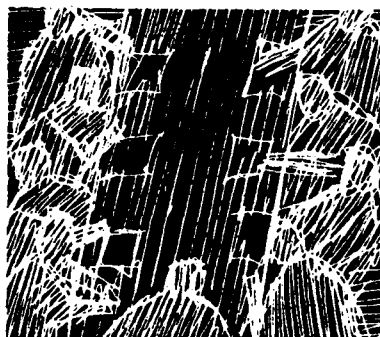
There are no current economic events which require either a tax increase or reductions in the spending of consumers, business firms, or the government. On the contrary, many economic indicators suggest that the economy is currently stagnating, if not really contracting, and that a tax increase would only worsen an already loosening labor market. The unemployment rate has been rising for the past nine months, in spite of the increase in the armed forces; payroll employment in manufacturing, construction and mining is below that of the first of the year, average hours worked per week has been falling, and, naturally, industrial production has declined. We might expect further declines in production as firms try to sell off their accumulating inventories. Therefore, as one looks at the economic behavior of the economy during the last nine months, the picture is one of contraction, rather than one which necessitates a tax increase. It is worth noting that the expected fiscal deficit is partially caused by reduced tax receipts, in the wake of lower output and profits. Although by late summer there were some indications that the economic decline was at an end, the automobile strike has caused reductions in output and profits, as well as employment, in related industries and, thereby, turned an unnecessary tax increase into an undesirable one. If the economy were to continue as it has over the past nine months in all its aspects, the appropriate fiscal policy might be a reduction in taxes.

In terms of gross output and per capita income, which are essentially similar, a 1 percent decline in the unemployment rate is worth slightly more than \$25 billion in goods and services or about \$100 more in per capita personal income. If it were accompanied by a rise in the

Consumer Price Index of 3 percent, real wealth would decline by about \$5 billion, if the price rise were entirely unanticipated. Thus, if it costs some people \$5 billion to improve some other people by \$25 billion, the economy as a whole will be better off. On these grounds, then, the argument is clearly in favor of further expansion, not contraction. To the extent that the inflation is anticipated correctly, the argument for expansionary policy is enhanced.

These conclusions are not altered even when we consider the criterion of personal or family income. According to some calculations by Professors O. H. Brownlee and I. O. Scott, a 3 percent price rise would reduce the net worth of families with less than \$3000 of income by about \$80-85, the equivalent of take-home pay for no more than two additional weeks of employment. A 1 percent decline in unemployment implies 700,000 more jobs. A conservative estimate would be that each of these jobs entails employment for 40 weeks per year, or a total of 28 million weeks of work. Although all this work would not go directly to the poor, the indirect effects such as higher wages, job promotion, and increased employment opportunities, together with the direct effects, would almost surely enhance the economic status of the economically disadvantaged. It seems obvious that on this ground, also, expansion is the required policy.

Nor can one reasonably argue any more that economic progress cannot reach our poverty-stricken and racial minorities. Recent empirical studies suggest that rapid economic expansion is almost the only way of alleviating the immediate economic problems of these groups. More-



over, in an economy where job opportunities are allocated partly on the basis of seniority, it is important in terms of social and economic justice that we allow workers from minority groups to build as much job security as possible before the next round of lay-offs begins.

The substance of my argument is that economic policy should be expansionary until unemployment falls to 2 percent concomitant with consumer price increases of 5-6 percent per year. That leaves the greatest burden of inflation on those "middle class" families with more than \$25,000 of net worth. Sophisticated arguments may be developed to show that even this group will be better off in the long run, but that is not my purpose here. I am

willing to take the position that the burden of government policy should tend to fall on those most able to bear it, not on those who can least afford it. The costs of inflation may be likened to costs of production, and the implication is obvious: it pays to expand output until the additional costs are greater than the benefits.

Thus, the benefit of reducing unemployment to 2 percent by expansionary fiscal and monetary policies seems to outweigh the national costs even if the CPI rises by 5-6 percent. In today's economy this means nearly two million more jobs, excluding the number of jobs neces-

sary to take account of secular increases in the labor force. The additional \$30-\$40 billion worth of goods and services which would be produced are only one result. We would, at the same time, be taking strong action to reduce domestic economic problems such as poverty, discrimination and crime. Expansionary labor markets induce labor mobility, encourage on-the-job training, and almost certainly result in a more efficient allocation of our labor resources. If excess demand exists in a world of relative scarcity it seems far wiser to increase output than to curtail spending.

## **A Protestant Viewpoint**



# **THE CHURCH AND VIETNAM**

**ROBERT McAFEE BROWN**

In his regular column appearing in many diocesan newspapers, my good friend Msgr. George Higgins has recently taken issue with some of my concerns about the church's involvement in the question of Vietnam. He has done so with extraordinary fairness and has raised some important questions. I hope my response will be more than an essay in self-justification, and that it can highlight some of the issues on which I certainly need more light in coping with the tricky problem of attempting to make the church and the gospel relevant to issues as complex and tragic as Vietnam.

Taking off from my portion of *Vietnam: Crisis of Conscience* (written with Michael Novak and Abraham Heschel and published by Association Press, Herder & Herder, and Behrman House), Msgr. Higgins agrees with me that Vietnam *does* represent a "crisis of conscience" and also endorses many of the recommendations my portion of the book sets forth. But he goes on to fault my approach, if I understand him correctly, on three counts:

Count One: I am too specific. Msgr. Higgins is unhappy with my "unqualified espousal—in the name of religion—of certain very specific solutions to the Vietnam crisis" and my "flat assertion that 'the churches and synagogues must mobilize enough support for [these] next steps so that our policymakers will be forced (*sic*) to move in new directions.'"

Count Two: I engage in "very severe and highly personal criticism of President Johnson, Vice-President Humphrey and Secretary Rusk." I gather that the passage Msgr. Higgins has in mind is the following: "It is a tragedy that no voice of creative leadership on Vietnam is coming

from the White House. Instead of statesmanship we have petulant and often angry remarks, when pleas are made to reassess our foreign policy. The Vice President is free to do little more than echo the President's position with more glowing rhetoric. The Secretary of State repeats, week by week, a position that if anything becomes increasingly intransigent. This vacuum of creative leadership is a tragedy . . ." (pp. 87-88)

Count Three: I ask the churches to get involved directly in the 1968 campaign to "throw the rascals out." (This is Msgr. Higgins quotation and not mine, but in fairness to him I must concede that it does, in substance if not with gentility, convey the gist of a portion of my argument.) Msgr. Higgins asserts that if the churches and synagogues were foolish enough to get involved in the Presidential campaign, even to the extent of supporting citizens who ask for a change of administration, they would be severely and properly criticized by most Americans, including those who are unhappy with our Vietnam policy.

Over-all count: "To say that [the churches and synagogues] must do more than they are currently doing to resolve this crisis is one thing. But to spell this out in detail is something else again."

Coming from Msgr. Higgins, such a critique must be taken seriously, since its author is (a) no darling of the right wing, and (b) has probably done as much as any other living person to draw American Catholicism into the arena of responsibility for the political, social and economic decisions that affect the life of twentieth century man.

I agree that there is something extraordinarily dangerous in attempting to offer specific political proposals as "Christian answers" to contemporary problems. It is the danger of equating the gospel with a particular political

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ROBERT McAFEE BROWN, *Professor of Religion at Stanford University*, writes a regular column for these pages.

stance and implying that those who disagree simply aren't Christian. This is the dilemma that has always beset the Christian political party in Europe, and I am glad we have no such group in this country. The *reductio ad absurdum* of this position is the famous remark of Harry S. Truman, that American foreign policy is based squarely on the Sermon on the Mount. One of the prayers at the last Republican National Convention, commending to the Almighty a particular attitude toward deficit spending, is another example that comes to mind. Probably no sin the church can commit is as grievous as the uncritical identification of its own human judgment with the will of God, and in this sin, let me add, Calvinists have been fully as guilty as Catholics.

But does a recognition of this clear fact debar us from talking specifically about specific issues? The opposite of specifics are generalities, and of generalities from the churches I for one have had my fill. I do not see that we add much to the public moral consciousness if we limit ourselves to saying that our Administration should seek peace in Vietnam, or that we must find ways to implement the love commandment in Southeast Asia, or that killing people is a messy business that should be avoided whenever possible. Such statements cost no one anything, and can be genially disregarded by those in power since they command immediate assent. No, it is only when we begin to get specific—at the risk always of being wrong—that the gospel begins to have any prophetic bite to it.

Over the years I have noted that most of us are quite willing to be specific in certain areas, at the same time that we deplore such a posture in other areas, and that the degree of specificity depends upon how passionately we feel about the issue at stake. After a number of years of speaking in platitudes about the race issue, to take an obvious example, the churches and synagogues finally began to get specific. We did not merely say that respect for persons extended beyond skin pigmentation; we said that segregation should be abolished by law, and we supported particular laws designed to achieve that end. We did not merely say that all citizens should be allowed to vote, we insisted that there should be proper supervision of polling places and that state laws designed to prohibit Negroes from voting should be abolished and other specific laws enacted in their place. We did not merely say that members of minority groups should be allowed to live where they chose; we supported specific fair housing laws designed to guarantee them that right. It was only when we moved from the realm of the general to the specific that our words began to count, or that social change began to be effected.

My own spiritual odyssey in relation to Vietnam has followed this path. Originally I avoided the issue; I claimed that I didn't know enough about it to have an opinion. But the more I read, studied and listened, the more I realized that momentous issues were at stake, even more momentous than those at stake in the civil rights

struggle. The generalities became, for me at least, too easy an evasion of the moral problem. It seemed, and still seems, imperative to mobilize the resources of the religious community to confront our policy makers with alternatives to their present course of action. In the book to which Msgr. Higgins refers, my suggestions were actually rather middle-of-the-road: support U Thant's three points, give more scope to international agencies in seeking to bring about negotiations, and so forth. They represented an attempt to draw upon the opinions of the "experts," to state a position moderate enough to attract (I hoped) significant support from the as yet uncommitted, and to offer some indication to the rest of the world that Americans were interested in something other than a military victory in Vietnam. By no stretch of the imagination could they be called far out, or even daring. (Indeed, in the months since the book was written, I have found myself pushed farther and farther to the left on the Vietnam issue, and now regularly break the law by my public decision to "aid, counsel and abet" those who in conscience feel they must refuse induction into the armed forces to fight in this particular war.)

Now, when it is clear that a national policy is not going well, is not achieving what it professes to achieve, and is, more importantly, causing untold hardship, suffering and death to millions of Southeast Asians as well as to thousands of Americans, does one not have an obligation to offer specific alternatives? President Johnson's response to his critics is always, "What would you do?" The churches and synagogues are surely not exempted from the need to offer an answer to that question.

In confronting the need to speak specifically rather than generally, the picture that haunts me is the picture of the German church in the 1930's in Germany. Confronted by the evil of Nazism, both Protestants and Catholics, with a few notable exceptions like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Father Delp, failed to speak the decisive word that was needed. Their condemnation was not specific enough to register. A papal encyclical, *Mit Brennender Sorge*, finally issued in 1937, was confined to such generalities that millions failed to get the message. (Camus' indictment of this indecisiveness in *Resistance, Rebellion and Death* should be required reading for all churchmen.) And I am desperately afraid that as people look back to the late '60s and survey the American church's response to the Vietnam crisis, they will offer the same indictment historians now make of the German church's response to the Nazi crisis: "too little and too late."

The validity of this analogy depends, to be sure, on a prior assessment that Vietnam is a desperately crucial issue for America and that it represents an evil of such magnitude that we are not entitled to hide behind generalities. Take one specific case: our indiscriminate destruction by bombing, napalm, strafing and defoliation of hundreds of South Vietnamese villages and our increasing willingness to destroy the civilian centers in our bombing of Hanoi.

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Can the church merely deplore this? Must it not condemn it? The Vatican Council constitution "The Church in the Modern World" (to which Msgr. Higgins contributed so much) is extraordinarily specific: "Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with their populations is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation." (Article 80) I submit that that comes astonishingly close to a literal description of what we are doing in Vietnam today, and that we cannot honestly evade its import. If so, where is the "unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation" that should be on the lips of every churchman today, Protestant as well as Catholic, since the declaration is addressed to the whole of humanity?

Some churchmen draw back from specificity because they fear making wrong judgments and thus bringing the teaching office of the church into disrepute. But is not the making of no judgment at least as grievous a sin? I simply think we have got to be willing to take the risk of being wrong. The truth is Msgr. Higgins' warning against specificity is the reminder that churchmen may not let piety go bail for expertise. But when we have done our homework, listened to and consulted with the experts, then it is time for specifics, even if they may be wrong. We can be sure in this secular day and age that if churchmen make mistakes they will be so informed by their fellow men. (I speak from the vantage point of considerable personal empirical evidence on this matter.) At the very least, the church's specifics can elicit a new level of discussion in the public forum, and if the answer is wrong it can help to elicit a response that comes closer to the truth. Some words of Karl Barth (one of the few churchmen in Germany who opposed the Nazis from the start) set the course: "Better something doubtful or over-bold, and therefore in need of correction and forgiveness, than nothing at all." (*Church Dogmatics*, IV/3, part 2, p. 870)

Thus far I have concentrated almost exclusively on Msgr. Higgins' initial criticism. The other two can be dealt with more compactly. What about this matter of criticizing those in public office? Is this something the church must not do? Msgr. Higgins obviously felt my quoted comments

on our Administration leaders to be intemperate if not ill-tempered, though I intended them to be merely descriptive, thereby indicating the self-deception into which we so easily fall. There is, to be sure, an etiquette of public exchange that should be honored in a democratic society, and pejorative speech is not only distasteful to most but usually backfires by creating sympathy for the one attacked.

At the same time, person and policy cannot be neatly separated from one another. Mr. Johnson's *policy* is also *Mr. Johnson's* policy, and he is committed to it in ways that I can only describe as increasingly intransigent. The fact that his own place in history is tied up with pursuing it to a successful conclusion makes it extremely unlikely that he will concede, in midstream, that he has been mistaken and that he will embark upon another policy, regretting those 13,000 American lives needlessly lost by his political miscalculation. Furthermore, his habit of using emotionally-charged occasions, such as the burial of military heroes slain in Vietnam, to attack the dissenters to his policy, seems calculated to place disagreement with his Administration in the category of un-American and unpatriotic activity, whereas the open expression of dissent is one of the things any leader in a democracy should particularly cherish for his people.

Without imputing sinister motives to our policymakers, I would insist that they must be held accountable for the consequences of their policies, and that in the case of Vietnam the consequences of those policies are not only the mounting toll of death and destruction, but the eroding of international trust in American use of power, the eroding of moral constraint in our own military operations, the perilous risking of an all-out war with China, and the daily diminishing of the possibility that Hanoi will come willingly to the conference table. Our Administration leaders, as the architects and builders of this policy, cannot escape accountability. A change of policy appears likely to be dependent upon a change of Administration.

This leads to Msgr. Higgins' third criticism, the charge that I advocate churches becoming directly involved in the '68 campaign, at least to the extent of supporting those individuals who push vigorously for a change of Administration. This is a tough one, and I admit it. I would find myself mightily disturbed if the American bishops all came out for Reagan, but I would find myself equally disturbed if they took a stand that no one in good conscience could support Martin Luther King. At the very least, the religious communities must insist on the need for some options in 1968. Is it not the task of the democratic system to provide alternatives at election time? It would be a tragedy if the only alternative to our present futile policy in Vietnam were provided by a candidate who decided to out-hawk Johnson. Bishops have been known to say that Catholics cannot vote for a man who espouses racist policies. Is it inconceivable that bishops could say that Catholics cannot vote for a man whose policy is bringing about

## THOMAS MORE SCHOOL

(est. 1959)

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the destruction and eventual obliteration of a tiny nation in Southeast Asia, whatever party he belongs to?

My own fear is that we Christians have hidden for so long behind the cloak of generalities that we may have lost the ability to translate them into specifics. Certainly, as Msgr. Higgins so rightly points out, many people will criticize the church if it becomes too specific in relation to the forthcoming presidential campaign. But aside from the fact that the church should not fear criticism, is it not just as likely that it will be faulted by those who claim that its advice is too bland to make any difference in the political arena? I am less worried by those who criticize the church for being too specific than by those who criticize it for being too vague. Consequently, if we are to choose a course to follow in the tumultuous months and years ahead, I would set it out in some such terms as these:

Let the church be willing to take immense risks in the arena of involvement in the secular order. Let us be prepared to fail a few times, if only that we may learn by these failures how not to fail the next time, if only that we may persuade the suffering race of men that we desire to stand at their side, sharing their burdens, bearing their cross, working on their behalf, exposed with them to the possibility of being wrong.

If the church is to err in our day, let it err on the side of overinvolvement rather than underinvolvement. Let it be specific rather than general, making mistakes of commission rather than of omission. Let it be too radical rather than too conservative. Let it spend itself now for a bleeding and bent world, rather than conserving itself for a future it may never have. Let it, finally, trust not in its own wisdom, much as it must employ its own wisdom, but trust rather in the resources of the divine wisdom that can overrule human folly, even ecclesiastical folly, for its own ends, and out of our faltering footsteps erect a clearer highway for the pilgrims who follow us.

LYNN WILHITE

### CONSUMMATION

All things in nature join: the butterfly  
In springtime palpitates upon the rose;  
The ear, like Helen won, is ravished by  
The nightingale whose song Tereus knows;  
A redwood clasps the reins of earth and sighs  
Through lofty fronds a murmured colloquy;  
The white breast of the shore serenely lies  
Against the measured breathing of the sea.  
As summer pears the laden branch, the bee  
The columbine, and infant milks the breast;  
As friend embraces friend and yet is free  
To wing an apogee, then choose the nest,  
So, love, your fertile words, your seed, unite  
With joy in me, and I must bear delight.

### ONE MAN'S LAUGH

## THE SCREEN

Since everyone seems to have his own idea as to what's funny, comedies are the hardest films to review. My own tastes once ran from the poignant and slapstick Chaplin pieces to the social drolleries with Carole Lombard, Irene Dunne and Rosalind Russell. And now I'm finding my laughter in such far-out exercises as "The Knack" and "The Jokers" and "Georgy Girl." So the best I can do in commenting on a round-up of comedies on our screens at the moment is to say which I found amusing. After that you're on your own.

I laughed and laughed at "The Tiger Makes Out" not only because it's set mostly in New York and partly a couple of blocks from me in Greenwich Village and I recognized the kookie types, but also because I could laugh at myself in the portraits of these rebels and the situations in which they find themselves. The plot mainly concerns a frustrated postman (wonderfully played by Eli Wallach with a mixture of anger and lovability) who's never been advanced because he's had no courses in Psych. or French or something, and a disconcerted woman (equally wonderfully played by Anne Jackson with a nice mixture of discontent and amiability) who's determined to return to college and not fall into a middle-class suburban rut. Convinced that society is always kicking him in the pants, Eli growls like a tiger and decides to fight back. His idea of fighting back against Establishment, convention and red tape, however, is rather screwball; and he kidnaps Anne who's come in from her suburb to register in college. What happens when these two discover they are not really enemies but playmates with much in common is hilarious.

The script, written by Murray Schisgal from his one-act play, "The Tiger," is very amusing and stays so for my money, throughout the movie's 90-some minutes in spite of the fact that the original has been greatly expanded in characters, incidents and sets. It's interesting that "Luv," which was also by Schisgal, fell flat on its face when expanded into a realistic movie, whereas "Tiger" works out well, probably because instead of being abstract like "Luv," its satire on city characters and city mores fits into the well-photographed New York scene beautifully. And Arthur Hiller has directed the large cast expertly to sustain the humor, the bite, the slapstick throughout the entire argument. Well supporting the two leads are Bob Dishy as Anne's husband, John Harkins as a neighbor who thinks he and Bob should trade wives (Schisgal must have a thing on this wife-trading business; he uses it in "Luv," too), Ruth White as Eli's ex-landlady who sold the apartment building six years ago but liked Eli so well she just let him go on paying rent, and many

more, some of whom turn in only bits but add considerably to the fun. For me, the tiger makes out well.

I laughed a lot at "Waterhole # 3," too, but I must admit that this satire on westerns, done somewhat in the manner of "Cat Ballou," is definitely not for everybody. Blake Edwards' production, handsomely displayed on wide screen in Technicolor, goes much farther than "Cat" in kidding the pants off the genre—what with the gambler-hero (James Coburn), a bad guy with a heart of gold that's pure brass; a heroine (Margaret Blye), the sheriff's daughter whose rape by the hero is not rape at all; a sheriff (brilliantly played by Carroll O'Connor) who's more greedily concerned with the gold bullion stolen from the army than with his daughter's virtue; a not-too-bright army captain (James Whitmore); the madame (Joan Blondell) in the brothel in the town of Integrity, who is also interested in the bullion and in the nice foreigner (Harry Davis) who turns out to be not so nice; and various other guys all of whom are looking out for No. 1 in "Waterhole # 3." Under William Graham all the kidding moves along at a fast pace, and admirers of westerns will get most of the jokes; in case they don't an off-screen ballad called "The Code of the West," effectively sung by Roger Miller, should guide them through all the burlesquing. The sophisticates for whom the film

was made won't need any guidance, but the song is the best part of the picture.

I'm sorry to report that most of the new comedies from abroad left me rather cold. When Britt Ekland drove over a man's foot in her car, and the audience (I saw this in a theater) howled with laughter, my interest in "The Bobo" lessened. But when Miss Ekland pulled this stunt a second time, I was ready to leave—my own foot began to hurt. The pretty Miss Ekland portrays the *femme fatale* of Barcelona, the *femme* whose bedroom favors Peter Sellers, as a singing matador, must win, to secure the theatrical contract he wants. How he finally wins the contract, and what happens to him when the beautiful girl discovers the deal, should keep audiences in stitches. As far as I'm concerned "The Bobo" is a boo-boo.

"Closely Watched Trains," which came all the way from Czechoslovakia, is a curiously annoying comedy in which a very young man doesn't make out well in his first encounter with sex, so he attempts suicide. Later, given a lesson by an experienced woman, he does better. And then, in this so-called comedy, set mostly at a railroad station during World War II, the lad suddenly becomes a hero in the Underground and is killed. Funny the picture is not. But then, one man's humor, etc.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG

## BOOKS

### *What happens when political vision dies?*

#### ***The Political Illusion***

JACQUES ELLUL

Knopf, \$8.95

#### ***Utopia, The Perennial Heresy***

THOMAS MOLNAR

Sheed and Ward, \$5.95

JOSEPH L. WALSH

It has become commonplace to speak about the present period as politically bankrupt. The liberal-labor coalition is fat and satisfied; socialism, bureaucratic and stultified where not totalitarian. Only racist nationalism seems capable of political rallying power, but its irrationally-based staying power, fortunately, appears short-lived. There are those who see the present drought as the gestation period for the birth of a new politics—participatory, decentralized, leisure-based.

But it is likely that other kinds of political forces will also emerge to fill the political vacuum in this period of uncertainty and confusion, forces counseling despair, withdrawal, privatism, reaction and rigidity. It is interesting to consider the two books here under review in the light of this second possibility. Not that either of them is as such conservative in the reactionary sense. Ellul, particularly, would disdain the myth of a romantic past or of a coercion-kept social order. Both books are interesting, however, as symptoms of what happens when political vision dies.

Of the two books, Ellul's is the more important. Molnar's most forcefully made point, that the utopian desire to bring about a perfect future leads easily to political totalitarianism, has been made before by J. S. Talmon, on whom he heavily relies, Hannah Arendt, Karl Popper, Robert Tucker and others. Molnar is weakest in precisely that area

where he might have made an original contribution, namely, the relation between political and religious utopian thinking.

Molnar's central thesis about utopian thinkers, among whom he lists people as diverse as Joachim of Flora, Rousseau, Marx and Teilhard de Chardin, is that they believe in an unspoiled beginning of history, an attainable perfection in history, the use of force to bring about that perfection and a desire "so thoroughly to organize freedom that they turn it into slavery." This argument has some interest when applied to certain medieval millenarian movements and reformers like Thomas Munzer. It breaks down, however, when applied to Martin Buber and Paul Tillich and degenerates into cheap polemic when he says of Teilhard that although he seems to set the problem of man on lofty heights his terminology "can, in fact, be translated at every turn into the lan-

guage of collectivism and of totalitarian politics."

Molnar falls into this kind of overstatement because his own anti-utopianism is, ironically, itself a kind of crusade. For him "utopian thinking is itself evil" and, although apparently uneradicable from the human mind, it must be controlled, contained and condemned. Obsessed as he is with the totalitarian tendency in utopianism, it never occurs to him to examine its catalytic role in the formation of Western political reformism, which he professes to support as an alternative to utopian perfectionism. Furthermore, he tendentiously parallels Bonhoeffer and Teilhard with gnostic and theocratic escapist myths of a perfect future in a manner too sketchy to be taken seriously. In addition, his ignorance of the patristic Christian tradition, as summarized for instance by de Lubac in *Catholicism*, leads him to condemn as heretical the social consciousness of contemporary Catholicism when it can easily be seen to be merely a revival of the Church's traditional concern for mankind's collective and cosmic destiny.

Nevertheless, in spite of its many distortions, the book can lead to reflection on the relation between the Christian notion of realized eschatology, or the kingdom of God present in history, and movements of political reform and revolution. It has become commonplace for Catholics and other Christians, even in spite of Niebuhr, to see the progressivism of the Enlightenment and Marxist eschatology as offshoots of the Judaic-Christian version of history. Reading Molnar, however, leads me to wonder whether there might not be a deeper mind-set, call it utopian if you like, which underlies and shapes all these visions, Christian included, of a better this-world. Unfortunately the present book contributes little to answering this important question, which, indeed, it only obliquely raises.

If reading Molnar, or at least his sources, leads one to recognize mythic elements in various proposals for a politically better world, Jacques Ellul presents a concentrated effort at stripping all the rose-colored filters from the eyes

of modern man looking at his society. In an earlier book, *The Technological Society*, Ellul tried to strip modern man of the illusion that technology is essentially a neutral instrument capable of good or evil and to see it as it really is, a blind, uncontrolled forced shaping and dehumanizing all of modern life. Now in *The Political Illusion* he tries to destroy the political myth, viz., that political problems and their solutions are the central events of this or any other time.

Ellul contends that in the mass society of both East and West, government can deal with issues only in general and unreal terms. He sees politics, in those areas still left to it by technical determinism, primarily concerned with reaction to and manipulation of public opinion; and since, for Ellul, public opinion deals not with facts as experienced realities but as selected and presented by the mass media, politics finds itself concerned primarily with a pseudo-reality (in Ellul's *Propaganda* this subject gets fuller treatment).

Ellul's point is not that politics is unimportant or insignificant. Indeed, in a time when everything has become political and under the eye of the state, what happens in the political arena has immense social ramifications. But, he contends, political evils cannot be corrected by political means. It is illusory to think that justice, dignity of the human person, or even true democracy can be brought about by political organization. For dealing with social problems today, and indeed to bring politics into touch with reality and under some control, truly autonomous and dedicated individuals and groups must exist. But these social, intellectual, economic and artistic bodies must be independent of the state and capable of denying the state's claim to have the right "to mobilize all forces and all energies of the nation for a single aim." In our times "private life must be re-invented," Ellul says. He believes that commitment to this goal of self autonomy, rather than escape into the pseudo-reality of politics, holds meaning for life.

Reading Ellul can be an annoying experience. He has a way of presenting

his impressions and observations with all the majesty of an imperial edict. And even so sympathetic a critic as Gerald Sykes recently devoted almost an entire review to Ellul's habit of presenting, as his own, views long held and expressed by others. More substantively, one can object to the constant overstatement of his case, as when he treats the masses as totally gullible and manipulable by the mass media, ignoring the many studies which indicate a much higher critical faculty than he allows.

Much of what he writes, however, rings true. Anyone who has participated in a civil rights demonstration more conscious of "the media" than the townspeople at hand knows what he means about public opinion and pseudo-reality. His frequently repeated point that governmental structures and agencies are incapable of dealing with questions of value got important corroboration recently from Daniel P. Moynihan in describing the diminution of concern and understanding for civil rights as one goes deeper into the bureaucracy of federal agencies.

Both Molnar and Ellul—and other such widely divergent types as the Hippies, the street guerrillas and the Minutemen—give evidence that social problems today exist for which previous political plans and structures are inadequate. Neither author even begins to outline alternatives or new solutions. But Ellul particularly is important in helping us distinguish substance from appearance and for an indication of where the problems really lie.

### ***The Other Side***

STAUGHTON LYND &  
THOMAS HAYDEN

*New American Library, \$5*

**JONATHAN EISEN**

Martin Luther King's embittered description of the United States as "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today" has provoked derision from most of the daily press, but to many peace advocates it reflected a commonly held assumption. With the growing conviction that the United States has renounced any

prospect of seeking a negotiated settlement of the war, the peace movement has been forced, out of sheer frustration, into increasingly radical postures and uncompromising rhetoric. Driven to the wall by a recalcitrant Administration, American dissidents now find themselves trying to defend their *right* to speak out rather than only the rightness of their criticism. And with an intensified sense of estrangement from the centers of policy-making, the peace people must now begin to run the risk of increasingly unrestrained confrontations with an evidently implacable President and Secretary of State.

The Lynd-Hayden book, a recounting of their widely publicized trip to Hanoi last year, exemplifies an approach to politics which, rooted in a deep sense of alienation from American society, no longer seeks accommodation. Lynd and Hayden have been in the forefront of the New Left for several years and are probably the closest thing to authentic radicals that America has spawned for a generation: it is for this reason that *The Other Side* commands our attention. However, my feeling is that it will not make many converts, and in its bias probably does not give an accurate depiction of North Vietnam. Its rather wearisome style, highly surprising from two writers usually so passionate, and its partisan blind spots will weaken its appeal to potentially sympathetic people who share many of the authors' concerns.

One of the problems of the New Left is in its concern for the purity of its positions and for building an enclosed community rather than in mobilizing power to build a political movement; Lynd and Hayden, likewise, seem less involved with the quality of their reportage than with doctrinal pamphleteering. Much as we may sympathize with their advocacy and their sense of urgency, I am afraid they will be treated as unpolished proselytizers rather than as responsible journalists. Wilfred Burchett (*Vietnam North*), Harrison Salisbury (*Behind the Lines*) and the numerous narrations of the late Bernard Fall all have given us a better story, without the travelogue hoopla.

If one of the tasks of the radical intellectual is to help dissolve the mind-war-

ing stereotypes which have helped to perpetuate the Cold War, then Lynd and Hayden have evaded their responsibility. For in the effort to describe the tribulations of an embattled people currently being bombed back to the Stone Age, the authors' effervescent romanticism projects an inevitably mawkish image. To offset the vulgar stereotypes of LBJ (who once characterized the Vietnamese as "yellow dwarfs"), Lynd and Hayden proffer their own stereotype of the New Stakhanovites: the Renaissance warrior, the tearful bureaucrat, the poetic revolutionary, the forgiving victim, the ingenious factory hands who write songs to the memory of Norman Morrison.

Perhaps they are true likenesses—I can't say. The feeling persists, however, that a good case can be made against the United States without resorting to gilded images of our adversary and his Chinese allies, especially after such a short visit and such obviously limited encounters. Their serendipitous discovery of "participatory democracy" in Hanoi seems, at last, to be more a function of yearning for Eden than a reflection of the actual socio-politics of North Vietnam.

Still, *The Other Side* is not merely propaganda or naive musings by two Communist dupes. Lynd and Hayden, at least on domestic issues, have proved themselves competent and provocative critics, unaligned gadflies. Their attempt in this book to correct some of the shopworn mendacities of the Cold War is in many ways a valuable contribution to the literature of dissent; their favorable description of the position of the North Vietnamese may help to alter some public misconceptions, not only about our "enemy" but about ourselves.

In their view this country has pitted itself foursquare against a world-wide "revolutionary impulse" which will not be overcome by our generals and our bombs. Whether or not this is so—and Engels in his later years had serious reservations about it—is somehow less important than the tragedy of all those people dying for that impulse: they still cannot believe that they have been fighting for 25 years only to go down in defeat; they are quite unable to realize, as are most Americans, that the United

States appears willing to obliterate their country to make an example to dissidents in other countries—even this one—who also may be harboring a "revolutionary impulse."

Lynd and Hayden have tried to depict the mind of the Vietnamese revolutionary who has battled to free his country from three world powers while waging a social revolution at the same time. But what finally emerges is the unfathomable distance between the idea of social revolution and the mind of Lyndon Johnson. According to *Times*man Max Frankel, Johnson's only explanation for the tenacity of the N.L.F. and their northern supporters is the American peace movement which has been giving them false encouragement; it is therefore probably no coincidence that every peace demonstration has been succeeded by American escalation of the war. "The demonstration of American resolve, at home as well as in the war, has come to be regarded at the White House as not only good politics but also an *essential aspect of military tactics*" (New York *Times*, April 28, 1967; my italics).

The authors' suggestion that this is a war where America is allegedly fighting for "freedom" while abrogating it at home still bears repeating and relating to America's refusal to recognize the validity of the demands of "the other side," with which we are led to identify. The intimation is clear: America will never negotiate so long as negotiation involves compromises. For to compromise means to confront the war as it really is and to understand the determined poor whom we are killing and piling up for body counts; it means that the United States will have to come to terms with the probable existence of a Vietnamese government whose major elements would be Communist.

Lynd and Hayden believe that "the American government is in Vietnam because it believes that the spread of socialism is impermissible regardless of how humane the particular socialism involved. Underlying that belief, in turn, is the premise that everyone in the world, deep down, wants to live as white America lives." If so, the Vietnamese have even less hope than the people of Watts.

### **The New Nuns**

EDIT. SR. M. CHARLES BORROMEO,  
C.S.C.

*New American Library, \$4.95*

**SR. DOLORES MARIE  
BURTON, S.N.D.**

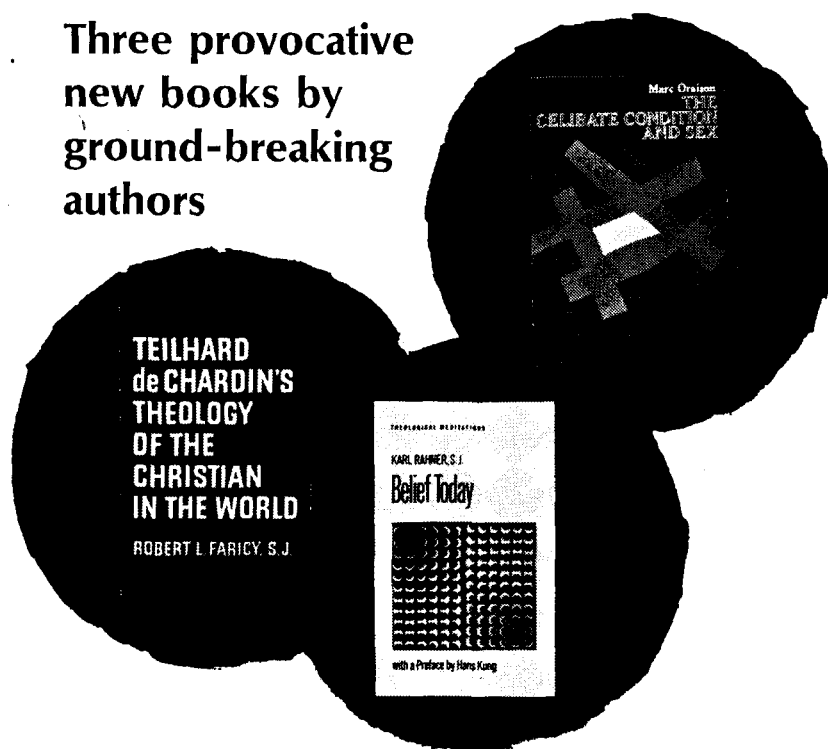
A young nun of the old school said to me one day, "Show me what is religious about the new way and I will change next week." Unfortunately, this book lacks a magic recipe for turning old nuns into new ones, but it contains almost everything else. A Jesuit touches on the key problem of "invested" interests, while a Dominican priest outlines an experiment in community living designed to free Sisters for more creative work. Michael Novak's title essay seems even more sensible than it did a year ago in the *Saturday Evening Post*. The remaining essays, all by nuns, range from theological reflection on the meaning of virginity to an account of people's reactions to Sisters in secular dress. They describe one nun's Chicago education, survey the activities of religious in the inner city, and speculate on the relationship between religious renewal and protest movements. There is an imaginary dialogue with Freud and a personal interview with Margaret Mead.

Some essays are carefully prepared documents presented at major conferences; many are brief excerpts from the Sisters' Forum of the *NCR*. That the collection is therefore uneven in style is not surprising and I mention the fact only to forestall this now familiar defense against new ideas. What is perhaps surprising is the fact that 21 articles by 18 contributors on apparently disparate aspects of religious life should nevertheless fall easily into the two polar oppositions of virginity and service; community and institution.

The new nuns are intensely conscious of their sign value. Embarrassed by their commitment to institutions and aware of bureaucratic depersonalization, the new nuns offer in its place a hope of community, but they ask: "Is any institution, not merely the total institution, submitted to a 'logic of control' which opposes it to the community

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as a 'logic of liberty'? If so, what are Sisters to do who, simultaneously and under the same roof, are managing an institution and living in community?" They see virginity as the central sign of community which releases the "communifying" power of love, and they ask: "Why are exclusivism and separation so characteristic of Christian Virgins?" These searching questions are raised and probed deeply by Sr. M. Aloysius Schaldenbrand.

Inevitably the new nuns are a sign of contradiction. The editor confronts frankly the necessary suffering in the soteriological dimension of religious witness. Fellow Sisters like my young friend ask how such an active, involved and "worldly" program as they propose can be religious, and lay colleagues hint that a type of religious more acceptable to modern society in the future might be one who had spent younger years raising a family.

Sr. Marie Augusta Neal's essays are remarkable for their ability to resolve such contradictory views of religious life. A backward glance at ghettos where gas ovens annihilated millions while Christianity hid its head, and a Camelot-misty glimpse of future religious communities which "cannot have walls against any man when worship and recreation are in order" because they

"must be all the things that man needs to reinforce his total dedication to the service of mankind"—these issue from a complex sociological analysis of the contemporary human condition that rises to a genuinely Christian vision which excludes no one.

This radical optimism underlies the thinking of all these writers: man makes his own culture and is responsible for it; spontaneous change can become effectively programmed change; religious and their Christian values can have a central place in the effort to effect cultural and social change in American cities and poverty-stricken continents so that the world's abundant economic goods will be available to all and the love of God will be made manifest to the poor and the needy.

The new nuns cannot always explicate fully the religious values in their mode of thought. Theirs is not an insight to be easily communicated. Their existence is a happening and they can only report the event. They have the potential to exploit modern sensitivity to signs where the increased awareness of sign *qua* sign heightens the consciousness of something beyond it. Their commitment to bringing Christian values to bear on social problems heralds a new sacramentalism where vowed freedom testifies to the free operation of the Spirit in the

Church. Sr. Charles Borromeo's introductory call to supplement the theoretical character of these articles by research that will effectively release the potential of religious women has already been heeded. Perhaps Sisters are moving very quickly; perhaps they do not wholly know where they are going: *That is how it is with all who are born of the Spirit.*

## Green

NORMA ROSEN

Harcourt, Brace, \$4.95

DON CRINKLAW

"Green was innocence," muses one of Norma Rosen's heroines, "and therefore to be despised. But green is also money and therefore"—long pause—"also to be despised?" Innocence is the theme unifying these nine stories, and in each one an aspect of "greenness" is revealed through collision with its opposite: innocence vs. callousness (a young woman is stunned by New Yorkers' reaction to a Puerto Rican murder: "as long as they only kill each other"), innocence vs. worldliness (wholesome George Wag, fresh from the Midwest, collides with the city's "gay" underworld), innocence vs. first experience (a sheltered teenage girl finds herself alone for the first time with her outrageous boyfriend).

Innocence wages war with corruption in the lengthy title story, from which the above quote was taken. Muriel Ruznack outraged her middle-class Jewish family by marrying for love instead of money (it was really as simple as that) and at 33 she finds herself married to a struggling painter, living in a deteriorating flat and under pressure from her sister—the wife of a prosperous slum landlord—and an old ex-poet friend who "wrenched himself out of shape" to make money in business. The crisis comes when the ex-poet offers her husband an opportunity to wrench himself out of shape by taking a job in an ad agency. Muriel is not in favor.

From this bare outline it would appear that Mrs. Rosen has prepared another essay on what Lionel Trilling has called the "message" of most contem-

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porary novels: "...how very bad The Culture is, and how it is to blame for the way people are when it isn't their own fault." True, Mrs. Rosen implies that we learn too quickly to suppress our better instincts because it seems they won't be rewarded, and when asked if we have no morals to answer, like Shaw's Doolittle, that we can't afford them. But here, as in the other eight stories, the author manages to keep things fairly in hand by a subtle blending of irony, pathos and occasional high comedy.

And by her brief suggestion, in telling us of Muriel, that innocence might not always present itself in the best of spontaneous reaction but may instead have its own flinty moral arrogance. At one point her husband tells her: "Your principles are great but you're too strict . . . People just naturally stray from the course you mark out for them. At this moment you are flunking something like 90 percent of humanity." And later on the ex-poet speaks to Muriel of her husband: "I don't think he's half as interested in being an artist as you are for him . . . You locked him in a mold and you won't let him out. It's as if he signed a contract with you." But in the end, as the little blurb on the dust jacket says, Muriel's innocence is shown as "more life-giving than all the wisdom of the world," and sympathy remains with her.

That's part of the problem. All the spokesmen for the Other Side are parodies in a stacked deck. The welfare-minded Reform Rabbi she consults is a distasteful parody: "Make *this* world better," he cries, "make *this* God's world . . . and wire your congressman that you are in favor of the legislation I've described. . ." And as for her crass and greedy brother-in-law: slum landlords I have known were not, Lord knows, models of charity and charm, but neither were they mock-ups. Somewhere in Mrs. Rosen's delicate, allusive style there broods the compassionate knowledge that even the wisest decision involves compromise and aching loss; nevertheless, I would be easier with the novella if Muriel's innocence were not so armor-plated.

The protagonists of five of the eight short stories remaining are women, which is no particular crime; but I wonder at the author's tendency to cradle them in a sympathy she does not extend the males in such generous measure. I mean more than a simple matter of a woman writer understanding her own kind best. The woman desolated by the city's heartlessness is drenched with compassion but poor George Wag, lost and alone amid shrieking fairies, is a hopeless figure of fun. Perhaps a truly feminist position believes that since men are responsible for the modern world, their discomfort in it is a little more amusing to watch.

### ***The Family Tree***

DOROTHY YATES

Farrar, Straus, \$4.50

**BRIGID ELSON**

*The Family Tree* is a short, spare tale about some unreformed, pre-Vatican II Southern folk Catholics named Parrington. Not only are they unreformed, they are unhappy, unchaste and unrepentant as well. Each of them is more concerned with his own individual comfort or dreams than with each other, and none has a horizon wider than the edge of his own front lawn. What ultimately keeps them together as a group is their blood-relationship, and it is the purpose of this book to show the Parringtons discovering just how unsuspectingly complicated that relationship is.

The cast of characters spans two generations, and the author tries, too ambitiously considering the brevity of her treatment, to get inside the skins of representatives of every age and both sexes, from not-too-elderly grandparents to youngish grandchildren. Not surprisingly, she is most successful when describing women and children. Some of the book's best writing is a tenderly ironic report of the exacerbated dialogue between a Methodist matron and her daughter, a convert to Catholicism, who has just been delivered, to the matron's disgust, of her fifth child. (As I was saying, these are pre-everything Catholics.)

Although the narrative is developed with some subtlety, this is not a very compelling work, in part because the author lacks the degree of compassion or wit that would rivet our attention. In place of these two qualities, either one of which would relieve the book of its slight aura of tedium, she offers sympa-

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2. Title of publication: **COMMONWEAL**.
3. Frequency of issue: Weekly, except bi-weekly, Christmas-New Year's and July-September.
4. Location of known office of publication: Erie Ave., F to G Sts., Philadelphia, Pa. 19134.
5. Location of the headquarters of general business offices of the publishers: 232 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.
6. Names and addresses of publisher, editor, and managing editor: Publisher, Edward S. Skillin, 232 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016; Editor, James O'Gara, 232 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, Managing Editor, John Deedy, 232 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.
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thetic, accurate observation and the occasional sly apercu or wry comment. There is in fact just enough humor in the book to make one wish she had chosen to see her essentially ludicrous characters in a more comic light.

Instead, Miss Yates has affixed her story to a kind of relentless symbolic machinery which, when examined for its own sake, threatens the frail integrity of the plot and burdens every character's every word and deed with a too-insistent significance. That part of the significance is religious does not help matters any; it is debatable at times whether the author has written a novel or composed a message, and a not particularly illuminating message at that.

But even messages are interesting when they come in pretty packages. Unfortunately Miss Yates is no fine stylist. She writes a bland, serviceable prose which is lucid without being poetic. It would seem, judging from the work of writers like John Updike or Edna O'Brien, that a radically individual style is crucial when a novelist's scope is limited. Miss Yates has not yet reached the point where one wants to linger over her language for its own sake. Given this problem, it will be interesting to see how the author develops her talent, for talent she has, in her next book.

## CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 43)

road to Emmaus: Christ himself. And it is undertaking those experiments as free from preconceptions as were, one feels, the disciples themselves. Such open experimentation involves risk: we may be grateful that the prospect did not frighten the Melkites among us.

WILLIAM BIRMINGHAM

### Cultic Worship

*To the Editors:* The Rev. Richard Neuhaus, in his reportage of the 1967 Liturgical Week (Sept. 22), touched briefly but pointedly upon a momentum-gaining phenomenon in current li-

turgical expression, that being the attempt of a worship-engaged community "to meet all of the individual's needs for interpersonal relations . . . with liturgical forms that provide 'warmth,' 'closeness,' 'intimacy,' etc. . . ." This intimacy, sought primarily by the younger elements of the people of God (especially to be found in seminary and religious surroundings), is a bastardization of the cultic worship which is primarily God-oriented. The eucharistic community is in effect a concentrated portion of the broader, work-a-day Christian people. The desire for an accentuated expression or representation of interpersonal relationships between members of a liturgical gathering is no more than an affectation when judged against the practical world. When engaged in a cultic practice of worship, an attempt to symbolize a personal intimacy between the individuals present becomes vapid, meaningless trumpery. At best, the symbolization is of an ideal and it therefore loses relevance to the integration of one's existential into his cultic expression of configuration with the Godhead.

DAVID M. RITZDORF

### The "Wall"

St. Paul, Minn.

*To the Editors:* Your editorial criticism (September 22) of Defense Secretary McNamara's plan to build an electronic wall across northern South Vietnam is based on two assumptions which seem questionable.

You argue first that since the plan obviously cannot work, it can only have the effect of discrediting Mr. McNamara's restraining influence on war policy and thus of playing into the hands of military and Congressional leaders who press for more extensive bombing of North Vietnam. The McNamara plan is commonly criticized because the military men are against it, and the military men are against it, they say, because the Maginot Line has proven once and for all the futility of such a strategy. But the Maginot Line was never tested because the Germans simply went around it. If the electronic wall were extended across Laos to the Mekong River—ac-

cording to some reports this is the plan—the story might be different. Further, one wonders whether military leaders are entirely disinterested in their professional criticism of a strategy which by its very nature aims at something less than total victory. Perhaps we should take more seriously whoever it was who said that most military men have been wrong about most wars.

Your second argument is that if Mr. McNamara were not permitted to build the wall he would be forced by the logic of his own testimony before Congress to an open break with the Administration; and that “the only protest the Administration may respond to is the public dissent of a key ‘team’ member.” But surely the Administration is so deeply committed to the war that it would resolutely slough off any form of dissent that lacked a solid political base. A near majority of the Senate, or a series of referendums like the one recently approved for San Francisco, might force a change of policy, but not a single team member.

On the positive side the McNamara plan has much to commend it. No nation has ever been bombed into capitulation or peace negotiations, and North Vietnam is not likely to be the first. If there is to be a settlement, or a reduction of the intensity of fighting, or even a containment of the war within its present limits, an end to the bombing of North Vietnam is imperative. But no President in wartime could possibly agree to a meaningful cessation of the bombing (not just a temporary pause under threat of renewal) without providing an alternate means to restrict the influx of troops and weapons which are killing American soldiers.

A protective wall extending through Laos might prove to be a military failure and a diplomatic catastrophe. But if nothing is done to halt the bombing of the North, the war could very easily become quite a bit more horrible than it already is—and public determination to prosecute the war could mount with the casualty figures, lest they have died in vain—before dissent in this country could develop sufficient political power.

Many who are morally repelled by the war find it impossible to endorse half-hearted measures. But those who would hold out for a more drastic change of policy might reflect that nothing can be accomplished as long as bombs fall on the North. A solid political achievement—if successful the wall would at least permit the President to halt the bombing—would be worth a hundred times more than warm feelings in the hearts of dissenters who maintained their moral purity intact.

Mr. McNamara has evidently made his move. He deserves our support.

JAMES D. TRACY

### Verbal Estalation

Vestal, N.Y.

*To the Editors:* I have just read the issue of Sept. 22. I had hoped that you would come to your senses and try to develop some sort of ethical stand about the Vietnam war. But you merely become more vicious and self-righteous. The character assassination you do on Johnson, Rusk, McNamara, and anyone who believes them approximately right, is straight out of Joe McCarthy; the only thing missing is the booze.

If you really want peace in Vietnam, why don't you do some honest thinking, keeping still until you *have* some thoughts, and then state them without the pretentious strutting that you have been intensifying? . . .

All of us want peace in Vietnam, most of us certainly much more sincerely than you do. But we don't know what to do other than Johnson is doing. . . .

GEORGE E. MOORE

### REVIEWERS

FATHER JOSEPH L. WALSH, C.S.P., is a student of the history of social and political thought and Catholic chaplain at Brandeis.

JONATHAN EISEN is an editorial assistant at *Commonweal*.

SISTER DOLORES MARIE BURTON, S.N.D., teaches in the Department of English at Emmanuel College in Boston.

DON CRINKLAW is a free-lance writer and critic.

BRIGID ELSON is currently doing graduate work in French at the University of Toronto.

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